

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA ADVISORY
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**TRIAL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR FOR DEATH PENALTY JUDGES TO
FEATURE TRIAL ISSUES ON THE STATE OF DNA AND OTHER
FORENSIC SCIENCE**

About 60 judges from around the state will convene for a two-day seminar in Chicago beginning Thursday, May 12 as part of continuing implementation of rules announced by the Illinois Supreme Court to improve the administration of justice in death penalty cases.

The rules went into effect in March 2000 after detailed study and public hearings by the Special Supreme Court Committee on Capital Cases and constitute a landmark reform effort by the Court on the conduct of death penalty cases. The two-day seminar beginning Thursday is the third seminar series on Judicial Management of Death Penalty Cases since the rules went into effect.

Among implementing other reforms, the rules require that judges who may sit on capital cases attend a Trial Management Course at least once every two years. The rules also require that every assistant state's attorney, public defender and private attorney representing a defendant in a capital case meet rigorous standards and become a certified member of the Capital Litigation Trial Bar and that attorneys in death penalty cases complete at least 12 hours of training in the preparation and trial of capital cases.

On Friday morning, May 13, the judges will hear from experts on the state of forensic evidence, including a presentation on the Scientific Potential and Judicial Realities of sophisticated technologies, including the use of DNA evidence.

Forensic science experts Joseph Peterson and R.E. Gaensslen of the University of Illinois at Chicago will make separate presentations Friday morning beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Stafford Henry, a noted forensic psychiatrist in Chicago, will talk about mental health issues in capital cases Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, located at 350 N. Orleans in Chicago.

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Cook County Circuit Court Judge Michael P. Toomin, chairman of the Special Committee on Capital Cases, will welcome participants and be available for interviews on the continuing work of the committee.

Print, TV and radio media that wish to report on the educational seminar are encouraged to receive additional details by contacting Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312-793-2323.